

The Computer as a Medium for Media Integration. Results and Experiences of an international online and offline survey.

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Computer-networks and computer-mediated communication (CMC) may lead to a deep change of media structure and of societies communication- structure. “Convergence” and “information society” are keywords in the controversial public debate on this topic.

On the one hand experts predict solutions of current problems based on the technical possibilities (economic growth, employment, international economic competition, modernization of society, political participation). On the other hand experts highlight possible negative progress (rationalization, new inequalities, lack of knowledge, social isolation and loss of social integration). Prognosis is based mostly on wide ranged unproved theoretical assumptions and on trend explorations, that have frequently to be corrected.

Resulting from this the authors have carried out an international survey among experts.

The “two-round-survey” was supported by the German government in 1998 to 1999.

The experts were asked about the short and middle- term development till 2015 on whether the computer will become a medium of media-integration and on the possible effects within different social sectors.

In total 360 scientists and “deciders” in politics and economy gave record of their prognosis, among which were 100 experts on information and entertainment.

For the GOR congress `99 a specific choice of results will be presented. The authors will discuss the following questions:

- (1) Technical forms of media integration: consumer products, platforms, user interfaces
- (2) Forms of media integration: divergence of offerings and convergence of usage?
- (3) Effects on the media
- (4) Effects of media integration: interactivity and virtuality? Focused are methodological questions, especially: (a) typology of online-vs. paper&pencil-

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participants (age, profession, specialization); (b) behavioral differences in answering the questions (panel-mortality etc.) between online- and offline panel; (c) methodical differences between online- and offline panel.

Keywords: Media integration (convergence), forecasts, online-Delphi